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Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006)

I. Introduction

1. The present report provides a comprehensive assessment of the implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) since the last report of the Secretary-General, of 28 February 2012 (S/2012/124), as well as the follow-up to the strategic review of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL).

2. The cessation of hostilities between Israel and Lebanon continued to hold, and cautious calm prevailed in the UNIFIL area of operations. Tensions along the Blue Line rose on a few occasions and were defused successfully through UNIFIL liaison and coordination channels. The parties continued to maintain their commitment to resolution 1701 (2006), although they remained unable to make further progress in the implementation of their respective outstanding obligations under the resolution.

3. During the reporting period, the ongoing turmoil in the region continued to affect Lebanon. Repeated incidents of cross-border fire, some of which caused deaths and injuries, occurred along parts of the Syrian-Lebanese border. On 9 April, a Lebanese journalist was killed in the Wadi Khaled area, when the car carrying him and two colleagues was targeted by heavy Syrian army fire. In several other instances, Lebanese civilians were killed or injured by gunfire from across the border. There were also incursions by Syrian security forces and abductions across the border of Lebanese and Syrian nationals. On 22 May, the abduction in the Syrian Arab Republic of a group of 11 Lebanese pilgrims returning from the Islamic Republic of Iran increased tensions in Lebanon and led to roadblocks and protests until calls for calm by political leaders were heeded. As at 21 June, the group remained missing.

4. Reports of arms trafficking across the Lebanese-Syrian border have continued. In two cases treated in detail below, the Lebanese Armed Forces uncovered significant quantities of weapons allegedly bound for the Syrian Arab Republic and arrested those involved.

5. Lebanon also continued to host Syrian nationals fleeing the violence in their country. As at 20 June, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and partners, including the Government of Lebanon, were providing assistance to over 27,000 Syrian refugees in Lebanon. They are predominantly located in the northern region of Akkar in Tripoli, and in the Bekaa valley.

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6. Amid rising tension relating to the crisis in the Syrian Arab Republic, particularly in the north of the country, violence broke out in Tripoli on 12 May following the arrest of an individual suspected of membership in an organization maintaining links with the Al-Qaida network. He was released on bail on 22 May. Serious fighting in Tripoli between residents of the predominantly Sunni neighbourhood Bab al-Tabbaneh and residents of the predominantly Alawite neighbourhood Jebel Mohsen broke out twice in the reporting period, continuing for several days on each occasion. At least 20 people were killed in the incidents, and many more were injured. The deployment of both the Lebanese Armed Forces and the Internal Security Forces in the area contributed to containing the situation, but tensions led on occasion to further shootings and remain high. In Akkar, two religious figures associated with the Future Movement led by former Prime Minister Saad Hariri were killed on 20 May by Lebanese Armed Forces soldiers at an army checkpoint. In response, protesters erected roadblocks throughout the country and three people died in subsequent fighting in Beirut. The Lebanese Armed Forces expressed regret over the shooting in Akkar. It also initiated an investigation and the personnel involved were detained.

7. The Government continued to seek to protect Lebanon from the worst effects of the crisis in the Syrian Arab Republic through its policy of "disassociation". Political leaders encouraged restraint in the wake of the various incidents. Momentum gathered for the resumption of the National Dialogue involving senior political leaders, and President Sleiman convened on 11 June 2012 the first such meeting since November 2010.

8. Less than one year before the next parliamentary elections in Lebanon, discussion is under way over the electoral system and measures of electoral reform to be adopted and implemented for the vote. There is no consensus as yet on what election law will be used.

II. Implementation of resolution 1701 (2006)

A. Situation in the UNIFIL area of operations

9. Intermittent periods of heightened tension and volatility in Lebanon did not significantly affect the area south of the Litani River. Palestinian commemoration events, which in past years were marked by serious incidents, took place peacefully on 30 March and 15 May and in early June. Prior to the events, UNIFIL liaised closely with the parties, bilaterally and through the tripartite mechanism, and urged them to take all necessary mitigation measures. The Lebanese authorities restricted access to the area south of the Litani River and to the Blue Line on these occasions, thereby preventing large public gatherings and potential incidents near the Blue Line.

10. The Israel Defense Forces continued their occupation of part of the village of Ghajar and the adjacent area north of the Blue Line, in violation of resolution 1701 (2006) and contrary to its obligation to withdraw its armed forces from the area. As I previously reported, UNIFIL submitted a proposal for security arrangements to both parties on 25 June 2011. The Lebanese Armed Forces informed UNIFIL of its approval on 19 July 2011. The Israel Defense Forces indicated that the proposal would require the approval of the Government of Israel, which is still pending.

There were no new developments on that issue during the reporting period. At a tripartite meeting on 9 May, the Lebanese Armed Forces requested that, pending progress on the issue, UNIFIL hand over security control of the SD1 road to the Lebanese Armed Forces and open the road to limited civilian use. The SD1 road is outside the Ghajar area occupied by the Israel Defense Forces. UNIFIL will address the issue of the use of the road with the parties, taking into account security sensitivities and the overall objective to facilitate the complete withdrawal of the Israel Defense Forces from northern Ghajar and an adjacent area north of the Blue Line.

11. UNIFIL remained focused on maintaining calm along the Blue Line. On a few occasions of heightened tensions along the Blue Line, mainly in the areas of Shab'a Farms, Kafr Kila and Blida (Sector East), UNIFIL quickly intervened to de-conflict the situation through its liaison and coordination arrangements.

12. There was a notable increase in ground violations of the Blue Line by Lebanese civilians, particularly in the Shab'a farms and other grazing areas by shepherds and their flocks for short periods of time. On most occasions, UNIFIL troops warned the shepherds not to cross the Blue Line, but their warnings were not heeded. UNIFIL asked the Lebanese Armed Forces to remind the population of the need to respect the Blue Line in its entirety and called on the Lebanese Armed Forces to enhance its monitoring and patrolling activities in known grazing areas. On 8 April, a Lebanese farmer excavated several trenches around a water well south of the Blue Line near Blida (Sector East). UNIFIL engineers and the Lebanese Armed Forces restored the ground to its previous state. On 25 April, a Lebanese national and his two children crossed the technical fence from Lebanon into Israel near Fatima Gate in Kafr Kila (Sector East), and crossed back to Lebanon the following day, after the Israel Defense Forces opened the gate at Ras Naqoura. UNIFIL informed the Lebanese authorities and the Lebanese Armed Forces, who took charge of the three Lebanese nationals.

13. On 27 April, UNIFIL observed a Lebanese excavator working in the Wazzani/Hasbani River near the village of Ghajar (Sector East) and violating the Blue Line. The workers ignored the UNIFIL notification that they had violated the Blue Line, and continued the works over the next days. The Israel Defense Forces protested this action as a severe violation of resolution 1701 (2006) and expressed concern that the works on the riverbed would affect the flow of the water. UNIFIL is investigating the Israeli claim.

14. Almost daily intrusions into Lebanese airspace by Israel Defense Forces have continued at a steady rate during the reporting period, mostly by unmanned aerial vehicles but also by fighter aircraft. These overflights violate resolution 1701 (2006) and Lebanese sovereignty. They also undermine the credibility of UNIFIL and the Lebanese Armed Forces. UNIFIL has continued to protest all violations, calling on the Israeli authorities to cease them immediately. The Government of Lebanon also strongly protested the violations, demanding that they stop. The Government of Israel continued to claim that they are a necessary security measure.

15. UNIFIL completed the investigations regarding the two incidents of rocket launching from its area of operations that occurred on 29 November and 11 December 2011. The investigation reports have been delivered to both parties and will be discussed in the upcoming tripartite meeting, which is scheduled for

4 July. UNIFIL investigations reconfirmed the preliminary facts of the incidents as set out in paragraphs 11 and 12 of my previous report (S/2012/124).

16. UNIFIL and the Lebanese Armed Forces continued their daily operational activities, including, on average, at least 38 coordinated activities per day, in addition to operating seven co-located checkpoints along the Litani River. UNIFIL and the Lebanese Armed Forces also continued to carry out joint counter-rocket-launching operations in the areas near the Blue Line. Joint activities also included capability exercises and training activities on land and at sea, including a joint artillery exercise, while other activities focused on the capabilities of the two Forces to deal with improvised explosive devices, search and rescue operations at sea, communication and information systems, and security awareness procedures. UNIFIL, for its part, conducted an average of 300 vehicle and foot patrols daily, in addition to regular helicopter patrols and other operational activities.

17. On 17 May, the Lebanese Armed Forces informed UNIFIL that it would redeploy one battalion from the South Litani Sector to its parent brigade elsewhere in the country. On 24 May, the Lebanese Armed Forces informed UNIFIL that it would further redeploy three mechanized infantry companies from the South Litani Sector. The current strength of the Lebanese Armed Forces in the area of operations is approximately three brigades.

18. During the reporting period, there were isolated obstructions to the freedom of movement of UNIFIL, which on one occasion endangered the safety and security of UNIFIL personnel. On 10 April, while conducting an activity that had been coordinated with the Lebanese Armed Forces, a UNIFIL public information team, with five UNIFIL troops, was assaulted by five civilians in the vicinity of Wadi Jilu (Sector West), causing minor injuries to one UNIFIL staff member while their equipment was forcibly taken away. The UNIFIL team was asked to leave the area and to contact the Lebanese Armed Forces in order to retrieve the equipment. UNIFIL strongly protested the incident to the Lebanese Armed Forces and launched an investigation into the incident. The Lebanese Armed Forces informed UNIFIL that an investigation was under way to identify the perpetrators and to recover the stolen equipment, only some of which has so far been returned in damaged condition.

19. There were also instances of unfriendly behaviour in Khiam and Blate (Sector East), where UNIFIL patrols were asked to leave and were insulted by local civilians; near Naqoura (Sector West), where a UNIFIL vehicle was damaged; and in Dayr Ntar (Sector West), where patrol maps were snatched. Incidents involving stone-throwing at UNIFIL patrols and vehicles occurred in Ayta ash-Shab (Sector West), Houla (Sector East) and Kafr Kila (Sector East). UNIFIL strongly protested all the incidents to the Lebanese Armed Forces and called on the Lebanese authorities to take action against the individuals involved.

20. Despite these incidents, UNIFIL relations with the local population remained generally positive. Regular liaison and outreach activities included meetings, community services, and cultural and educational activities carried out with local communities, with the participation of governmental institutions. UNIFIL also organized a number of social and cultural events and vocational training. Quick-impact projects continue to be implemented by troop-contributing countries and through the UNIFIL budget.

21. UNIFIL continued to provide assistance to the Lebanese Armed Forces in taking steps to establish an area free of armed personnel, assets and weapons between the Blue Line and the Litani River, other than those of the Government of Lebanon and UNIFIL. This remains a long-term objective, as a number of incidents since the adoption of resolution 1701 (2006) demonstrated that weapons and hostile armed elements ready to use them were still present within the area of operations. UNIFIL activities did not lead to the discovery of any new arms caches or unauthorized military infrastructure. The Force did not find evidence that previously discovered sites had been reactivated. Armed persons and weapons remained present inside Palestinian refugee camps in the UNIFIL area of operations.

22. The Government of Israel continued to allege that Hizbullah had been building up its military positions and units inside populated areas in southern Lebanon and that unauthorized weapons were being transferred into Lebanon, including into the UNIFIL area of operations. In case specific information is received regarding the illegal presence of armed personnel or weapons in its area of operations, UNIFIL, in cooperation with the Lebanese Armed Forces, remains determined to act with all means available within its mandate and to the full extent provided for in its rules of engagement, as described in my previous reports. According to its mandate, UNIFIL cannot enter private property unless there is credible evidence of a violation of resolution 1701 (2006), including an imminent threat of hostile activity emanating from that location. To date, UNIFIL has neither been provided with, nor has found, evidence of the unauthorized transfer of arms into its area of operations. The Lebanese Armed Forces command continued to state that it would act immediately to put a stop to any illegal activity in contravention of resolution 1701 (2006) and relevant Government decisions.

23. During the reporting period, UNIFIL observed a number of instances of unauthorized presence of armed personnel and weapons in its area of operations in violation of resolution 1701 (2006). In the early hours of 22 April, a bomb exploded in a restaurant in Tyre, injuring five civilians. There has been no claim of responsibility for the attack. The Lebanese authorities launched an investigation into the explosion, the fourth such attack against a private restaurant or hotel in Tyre in the past six months. On 5 February in the vicinity of Blida, UNIFIL observed a vehicle with three civilians wearing ski masks and pointing rifles out of the windows. UNIFIL transmitted the number plate and the type of vehicle to the Lebanese Armed Forces for investigation. On 30 April, two bullet impacts were found at United Nations Position 9-10 in the vicinity of Tulin (Sector West). One impacted a United Nations vehicle and the other a combat post. Two UNIFIL quick reaction patrols were deployed immediately and force protection measures were reinforced. UNIFIL is currently investigating the incident.

24. During the reporting period, UNIFIL continued to encounter many instances of individuals carrying hunting weapons and, in every instance, UNIFIL patrols moved to stop the hunting activity. On at least three occasions, the Lebanese Armed Forces detained armed hunters. However, in most cases the hunters quickly left the scene upon the arrival of UNIFIL or the Lebanese Armed Forces. UNIFIL continues to maintain a high number of patrols and observation posts in known hunting areas and on popular hunting days. On 22 March, a serious incident could have occurred when armed hunters recklessly opened fire in the general direction of UNIFIL troops carrying out mine clearance, resulting in a minor injury to one UNIFIL soldier hit by a shotgun pellet. Hunting south of the Litani River is a violation of resolution 1701

(2006), and the responsibility for preventing hunting in the area of operations rests with the Lebanese authorities, with the assistance of UNIFIL.

25. The UNIFIL Maritime Task Force continued to carry out its dual mandate of conducting maritime interdiction operations and training the Lebanese naval forces. Since my last report, the Lebanese navy and customs officials inspected 199 vessels identified as suspicious to verify that there were no unauthorized arms or related material on board. In two separate instances, the Lebanese authorities reported to UNIFIL that they had found unauthorized cargo consisting of weapons and military equipment, which were being smuggled into Lebanon from the sea in violation of resolution 1701 (2006). The incidents are discussed in paragraphs 45 and 46.

26. In response to requests by Lebanese authorities, the UNIFIL Maritime Task Force intensified its surveillance activities in certain parts of the area of maritime operations. UNIFIL and Lebanese naval forces conducted 9 workshops and 144 at-sea training activities on board the Maritime Task Force units for Lebanese junior officers. In addition, during the reporting period five-day maritime interdiction operation exercises were conducted on five occasions with the Lebanese Armed Forces navy.

27. Incidents along the line of buoys continued to occur, with the Israel Defense Forces dropping depth charges and firing warning shots along the buoy line. UNIFIL has no mandate to monitor the line of buoys, which the Government of Israel installed unilaterally and which the Government of Lebanon does not recognize.

B. Security and liaison arrangements

28. UNIFIL continued to carry out its liaison and coordination with both parties, as set out in my previous reports. Daily interaction and liaison activities between UNIFIL and the Lebanese Armed Forces continued at its established high and effective level. UNIFIL also has maintained effective liaison and coordination with the Israel Defense Forces, including through expanded activities of the Observer Group Lebanon of the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization. There has been no progress in establishing a UNIFIL office in Tel Aviv.

29. UNIFIL liaison and coordination arrangements with the parties continued to function well, and the parties repeatedly demonstrated their readiness to engage constructively in UNIFIL efforts to address points of contention and decrease tensions. In line with the recommendation of the strategic review for UNIFIL to examine the possibility of further strengthening the tripartite mechanism to facilitate practical arrangements on the ground between the Lebanese Armed Forces and the Israel Defense Forces that would build confidence and defuse tension in potential flashpoints, the tripartite forum continued to convene on a monthly basis. In addition, two special tripartite meetings were held during the reporting period to address sensitive developments in Kafr Kila and the Shab'a Farms.

30. Concerning the area of Kafr Kila, both parties expressed interest in applying additional security measures to mitigate the potential for incidents. The Israel Defense Forces proposed to erect a wall in place of the existing technical fence. These works were facilitated and coordinated by UNIFIL through its liaison channels and a special tripartite meeting, with a view to avoiding any

misunderstandings and ensuring security for the duration of the works. The construction of the wall, which measures approximately 1 kilometre in length and from 5 to 7 metres in height, began on 30 April and was completed at the beginning of June 2012 without any serious incident. Works to place a technical fence on top of the wall are ongoing.

31. A special tripartite meeting was convened at the initiative of UNIFIL on 25 April to address rising tensions in the Shab'a Farms area following road works undertaken by Israel Defense Forces on 18 April in the proximity of the Blue Line. While it is beyond the remit of UNIFIL to discuss the status of the Shab'a Farms, UNIFIL sought to prevent tension and to de-conflict a potentially dangerous situation while ensuring continuing respect of the Blue Line. The parties maintained their respective positions on the issue. At the time of writing, there had been no further road works in this area.

32. The process of visibly marking the Blue Line continued. As at 15 June, the total number of points agreed between the parties for marking had reached 253 out of 470 to be marked. The marking process requires the clearance of minefields and the disposal of unexploded ordnance in order to create safe access for measuring the coordinates and constructing the Blue Line markers. UNIFIL cleared access to 215 points and 149 have been measured. Some 141 Blue Line markers have been constructed and 112 of those markers have been verified by both parties. As agreed with the parties, UNIFIL is now undertaking maintenance work for the Blue Line markers previously installed.

33. In accordance with the recommendations of the strategic review, UNIFIL invited the parties to revisit the points, which had thus far been deemed contentious or problematic. At the tripartite meeting on 9 May, it was agreed that UNIFIL would conduct bilateral consultations with the parties on how to tackle these areas. UNIFIL also invited the parties to make proposals on the way forward in this regard, keeping in mind the recommendations of the strategic review to explore the possibility of either reaching an agreement to proceed with marking, or a common understanding on rules of engagement or security arrangements for areas where the parties are in disagreement regarding the marking of the Blue Line.

34. At the tripartite meeting held on 28 March 2012, the Israel Defense Forces and the Lebanese Armed Forces confirmed their interest in addressing questions of maritime security through the tripartite mechanism. Subsequently, UNIFIL engaged with the parties in bilateral consultations, holding thus far one meeting with the Israel Defense Forces and two with the Lebanese Armed Forces. The consultations are still ongoing. Both parties displayed a constructive approach and genuine interest in achieving progress on the issue of maritime security, but the gap in their respective positions remained wide.

35. In line with the strategic priorities identified by the strategic review, UNIFIL continued to work closely with the Lebanese Armed Forces through the strategic dialogue with a view to increasing the capacity of the Lebanese Armed Forces, not only as a prerequisite for the gradual assumption of security control of the area of operations and Lebanese territorial waters, but also as a key element towards a permanent ceasefire. The draft plan of the strategic dialogue between the Lebanese Armed Forces and UNIFIL was developed by the Lebanese Armed Forces with the support of UNIFIL.

36. UNIFIL sought to expand the concept of special procedures to new areas along the Blue Line, as a key tool for removing possible tension and preventing incidents, and in line with the recommendation of the strategic review to focus on promoting arrangements and pragmatic localized understandings between the parties. Both the Israel Defense Forces and the Lebanese Armed Forces have welcomed the initiative. The Lebanese Armed Forces have agreed to support all liaison and coordination measures and the Israel Defense Forces said they would support all friction mitigation measures as allowed by practical and operational considerations.

C. Disarming armed groups

37. Resolution 1701 (2006) calls for the full implementation of the relevant provisions of the Taif Accords and of resolutions 1559 (2004) and 1680 (2006) that require the disarmament of all armed groups in Lebanon, so that there will be no weapons without the consent of the Government of Lebanon and no authority other than that of the Government of Lebanon.

38. The maintenance of arms by Hizbullah and other groups outside the control of the Lebanese State, in violation of resolutions 1559 (2004), 1680 (2006) and 1701 (2006), remains a serious concern. I have called repeatedly for the implementation of the resolutions in relation to such weapons, which impair the ability of the State to exercise full sovereignty and authority over its territory. Hizbullah has continued to acknowledge openly that it maintains a substantial military capacity separate from that of the Lebanese State and indeed that it has received material, moral and political support from the Islamic Republic of Iran. Hizbullah representatives continue to claim that the arms of the movement serve as a deterrent against potential aggression from Israel.

39. There has been no progress on the dismantling of military bases maintained by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command (PFLP-GC) and Fatah al-Intifada outside the control of the Lebanese State. All but one of these bases are located along the Lebanese-Syrian border, compromising Lebanese sovereignty and governmental authority and impeding the ability of the State to effectively monitor and control the land border between Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic. I have repeatedly called on the Lebanese authorities to dismantle the PFLP-GC and Fatah al-Intifada military bases and on the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic to cooperate with such efforts. During the month of May, the head of PFLP-GC, Ahmad Jibril, visited Lebanon for the first time since 2006 and met with a number of political leaders, particularly from the March 8 coalition. Mr. Jibril asserted that his group would not give up its arms and that the disarmament of Palestinian factions outside refugee camps in Lebanon would be conceivable only once the Arab-Israeli conflict were settled and the rights of the Palestinian people assured.

40. The situation in the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon also remains of concern. The Lebanese authorities continue to deem cooperation with security authorities in the camps to be satisfactory. However, in March an alleged ringleader of a network suspected of planning attacks against the Lebanese Armed Forces took refuge in the Ain al-Hilweh camp. There are conflicting reports as to his current whereabouts. On 17 May, the Lebanese Armed Forces arrested the driver of a vehicle suspected of carrying weaponry out of the Ain al-Hilweh camp. On 15 June,

tensions increased in the Nahr al-Bared camp after the Lebanese Armed Forces arrested two young Palestinians who refused to present their identity papers at a checkpoint. Residents subsequently attacked the army post with stones, during which one Palestinian was killed. In the ensuing clashes in Nahr al-Bared and Ain al-Hilweh on 18 June, two people were killed. In addition, a substantial number of camp residents and Lebanese Armed Forces personnel were injured. The incidents sparked demonstrations in other camps in Lebanon. The incidents highlighted the specific need to address access issues there while continuing to respect broader security concerns.

41. Repeated incidents throughout the country during the reporting period, including the assassination attempt on 4 April against the leader of the Lebanese Forces party Samir Geagea, highlighted once again the widespread proliferation of arms in Lebanon and the risk this poses to the maintenance of domestic stability and unity. The fighting in Tripoli, as well as the violence that subsequently erupted in Beirut and elsewhere, also illustrated starkly the dangers associated with the prevalence of medium and heavy weaponry outside the control of the State.

42. Against the background of rising tension and uncertainty in the country, new momentum was generated for the resumption of the National Dialogue in Lebanon, as called for by the United Nations. With the encouragement of King Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz of Saudi Arabia, among others, President Sleiman convened a meeting of the National Dialogue on 11 June with an agenda covering defence strategy, including specifically questions relating to the use of Hizbullah's arms; Palestinian arms held in or outside the camps; and arms in and around city centres. In relation to the first category, such use was specified as being in defence of Lebanon. The meeting took place on 11 June, following which the participants issued a declaration recording their agreement on 17 points, including commitment to the promotion of calm on the security, political and media levels; avoidance of violence and recourse to arms; support for the Lebanese Armed Forces; making Lebanon neutral with respect to regional and international conflicts and the avoidance of the negative impact of regional crises, except in matters where there is an Arab or international consensus or relating to the Palestinian cause; and commitment to international resolutions and specifically resolution 1701 (2006). The parties agreed to meet again on 25 June to discuss the specific agenda items proposed by President Sleiman.

D. Arms embargo and border control

43. In resolution 1701 (2006), the Security Council decided that all States were to prevent the sale and the supply of arms and related materials to entities or individuals in Lebanon by their nationals, or from territories, or using their flag vessels or aircraft. In resolution 1701 (2006) the Council also called upon the Government of Lebanon to secure its borders and other entry points to prevent the entry into Lebanon without its consent of arms and related materials.

44. Representatives of the Government of Israel have reiterated their allegations of significant arms transfers to Hizbullah across the Syrian-Lebanese border during the reporting period. The United Nations takes these allegations seriously but is not in a position to independently verify them.

45. There is, however, substantiated information with regard to arms trafficking across the Lebanese-Syrian land border into the Syrian Arab Republic. On at least

two occasions during the reporting period, the Lebanese Armed Forces intercepted arms entering Lebanon in violation of the arms embargo imposed by resolution 1701 (2006). These constituted the most significant attempts to breach the arms embargo reported by the Lebanese authorities since the adoption of resolution 1701 (2006). On 27 April, the Lebanese navy intercepted a Syrian-owned ship flying the flag of Sierra Leone in Lebanese territorial waters as the vessel was en route to Tripoli and discovered three containers of arms, ammunition and military equipment aboard. In a second instance, on 8 May, the Lebanese authorities indicated that they had seized a large quantity of military ammunition in the port of Tripoli. The ammunition was hidden in a car being imported into Lebanon.

46. Preliminary results of the investigations by the Lebanese Armed Forces indicate that in both instances the weaponry was bound for members of the armed opposition in the Syrian Arab Republic. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic has written to the President of the Security Council and myself, in the form of a letter from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic dated 17 May 2012 (S/2012/334), asserting that the weapons aboard the vessel intercepted on 27 April were to be smuggled into Syrian territory for the benefit of terrorist groups.

47. In the letter from its Permanent Representative dated 17 May, the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic made further assertions of actions directed against the Syrian Arab Republic from Lebanese territory, including breaches of the arms embargo imposed under resolution 1701 (2006). The Lebanese political and security authorities, including President Sleiman and Prime Minister Mikati, have firmly rejected the assertions contained in the letter from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic, indicating that its content is not accurate and that it is not based on verified information. The Lebanese authorities have further informed the United Nations that, beyond those instances that they have specifically reported, they do not believe there are widespread breaches of the arms embargo. The Lebanese authorities have also indicated that the land border between Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic remains difficult to control, but that the Lebanese Armed Forces are deployed and have sought to tighten control along the border to the best of its ability by increasing the number of patrols and observation missions.

48. The allegations of arms trafficking across the Syrian-Lebanese border and repeated actions and incidents along the border that caused death or injury to civilians reinforce the need for the adoption and the implementation of a comprehensive strategy for the management of Lebanon's land borders, which has long been recognized. In the current Government, Prime Minister Mikati designated Minister of the Interior Charbel to lead an interministerial committee tasked with elaborating such a strategy. Donors have continued to engage on this issue; however, until a strategy is endorsed by the Government, the mobilization of additional donor resources remains a challenge.

49. The number of Syrian refugees in Lebanese territory has grown since my report issued in February (S/2012/124). As at 20 June 2012, more than 27,000 Syrians were being assisted in Lebanon, more than 20,000 of whom had registered with UNHCR and the Government of Lebanon. There were approximately 3,000 people waiting to be registered in Tripoli and surrounding areas. UNHCR has begun the process of registering displaced Syrians in eastern Lebanon, where approximately 9,000 Syrians are being assisted. In north Lebanon, the United Nations and the

Government's High Relief Commission continue to work together on the provision of protection and assistance to Syrian refugees. In eastern Lebanon, where the High Relief Commission is not present, the United Nations family works in full coordination with local authorities and NGOs. In the north, the High Relief Commission has continued to cover expenses related to the treatment of Syrian refugees, including the wounded, in Lebanese hospitals; in the Bekaa, UNHCR and partners are covering the medical treatment of Syrian refugees.

E. Landmines and cluster bombs

50. The Lebanese Mine Action Centre, a unit of the Lebanese Armed Forces, is the national authority for mine action in Lebanon with full responsibility for the management of all humanitarian clearance and mine action data. The United Nations Mine Action Support Team continued to support UNIFIL demining activities along the Blue Line by providing training to contingents, as well as conducting validation and quality assurance monitoring. On 8 May, the Israel Defense Forces handed over a map to UNIFIL, detailing the 1974 location of a minefield located near United Nations positions 4-7C, in the area of Shab'a Farms (Sector East).

F. Delineation of borders

51. During the reporting period, no steps were undertaken by either the Syrian Arab Republic or Lebanon towards the implementation of relevant provisions of Security Council resolutions 1680 (2006) and 1701 (2006) regarding the delineation of their common border. However, the prevailing circumstances along the Lebanese-Syrian border and repeated incidents, including in areas where the border is uncertain, some of which have involved death or injury among civilians on either side of the border, continue to highlight the need for its full delineation and demarcation. The issue of PFLP-GC and Fatah al-Intifada bases straddling the border must also be resolved.

52. There has been no progress either on the issue of the Shab'a Farms area. Tension between Lebanon and Israel over planned Israel Defense Forces works south of the Blue Line in this area further emphasizes the need for all parties, here as elsewhere, to fully respect the Blue Line, to act with maximum restraint and to refrain from taking any measures close to the Blue Line that could lead to misunderstandings or be perceived by the other side as provocative. It also underlines the need to advance delineation of the international borders of Lebanon, especially in those areas where the border is disputed or uncertain, including by dealing with the Shab'a Farms area. To date, neither the Syrian Arab Republic nor Israel has reacted to the provisional definition of the area contained in my report on the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) (S/2007/641), issued on 30 October 2007.

III. Security and safety of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

53. The security and safety of UNIFIL personnel remains a high priority. UNIFIL continuously reviewed its security plans and risk mitigation measures, and carried

out safety awareness training for its personnel and force protection works for installations and assets. UNIFIL and the Lebanese authorities continued to cooperate to ensure that all security threats are addressed appropriately. Complementing the measures taken by the Government of Lebanon, UNIFIL has continued to apply its own risk mitigating measures.

54. UNIFIL continued to observe proceedings in the Lebanese military court in cases related to serious attacks against UNIFIL peacekeepers, as well as investigations into incidents involving forceful obstruction to UNIFIL activities. Court hearings on appeals related to sentences handed down last October in the case of intended attack against UNIFIL in 2008 were postponed until the beginning of 2013 for procedural reasons. A hearing in one case of attack against a UNIFIL patrol in 2011 was conducted on 1 June in conjunction with the arrest of one suspect, and was adjourned until 21 September 2012 to call the witnesses. In another case where three defendants are accused of having formed an armed gang aimed at implementing terrorist attacks against the State military institutions and UNIFIL, a hearing scheduled on 8 June was adjourned until 16 November 2012. On the investigations into incidents involving forceful obstruction to UNIFIL activities, there has been little progress. It is the responsibility of the Lebanese authorities to ensure the safety and security of UNIFIL personnel, equipment and premises, and to bring the perpetrators of unlawful acts to justice.

IV. Deployment of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

55. As at 11 June 2012, the total military strength of UNIFIL was 11,845, including 437 women. The civilian component consisted of 374 international and 698 national civilian staff members, including 101 and 168 women, respectively. As part of UNIFIL, Observer Group Lebanon was composed of 48 United Nations Truce Supervision Organization military observers.

56. France reduced its contribution to UNIFIL by withdrawing 450 troops, part of its artillery and engineering capabilities. Finland completed the deployment of 177 troops by 18 May 2012 as part of Ireland's light infantry battalion. Ireland concomitantly downsized its strength by one company. The total strength of the Finnish-Irish battalion is 500. Portugal withdrew its engineering company by the end of June. Indonesia deployed a new corvette to the Maritime Task Force on 10 June, bringing the total strength of the Maritime Task Force, currently operating with a Brazilian flagship, to nine vessels.

57. UNIFIL is developing plans, in consultation with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, to implement the recommendations of the military capability study. This includes the possibility of troop adjustments, with a view to contributing to a leaner but no less capable force while ensuring that the Force's ability to discharge its mandated tasks is preserved and consistent with the priorities identified by the strategic review.

V. Observations

58. The continued stability in the UNIFIL area of operations is noteworthy, and I commend both parties for keeping a steady focus on maintaining calm along the Blue Line. In an environment of wider uncertainty and turbulence in the region, resolution 1701 (2006) and the arrangements put in place pursuant to it continue to provide predictability and effective mechanisms to address issues of concern for the parties. It is crucial to protect these achievements and safeguard the unprecedented period of stability and calm they have brought to the area along the Blue Line. I urge the Governments of Israel and Lebanon to maintain their commitment to the cessation of hostilities and to the full implementation of resolution 1701 (2006).

59. The continuing crisis in the Syrian Arab Republic has deeply affected Lebanon, polarizing opinion and increasing tension. Leaders across the political spectrum have, however, responded responsibly in seeking to defuse incidents. In addition, the policy of disassociation pursued by the Government has helped to preserve stability domestically and has rightly attracted international support.

60. I remain concerned at the lack of progress on the implementation of the parties' respective obligations towards achieving a permanent ceasefire and long-term solution to the conflict as envisaged in resolution 1701 (2006). I reiterate my call on the parties to take full advantage of the strategic environment that UNIFIL, in cooperation with the Lebanese Armed Forces, has helped to establish. The parties must maintain their commitment to the cessation of hostilities; fully respect the Blue Line in its entirety; continue working with UNIFIL on pragmatic and constructive confidence-building measures along the Blue Line, including visibly marking the Blue Line; and work to strengthen the liaison and coordination arrangements.

61. At the same time, it is incumbent on each party to carry out other actions. Israel must withdraw its forces from the northern part of Ghajar and an adjacent area north of the Blue Line and cease all violations of Lebanese airspace, which exacerbate tensions in the UNIFIL area of operations and have the potential to trigger a serious incident. Lebanon must make further progress towards exercising effective authority over all Lebanese territory, preventing the use of its territory for hostile activities, and ensuring the implementation of Government decisions and the stipulations of resolution 1701 (2006) with respect to an area free of armed personnel, assets and weapons other than those of the Government and of UNIFIL.

62. In addition, in a climate of high rhetoric and tension, the frequency and the intensity of security incidents throughout the country during the reporting period underline the need for the Lebanese State to make progress towards fully asserting its monopoly on the legitimate use of force. Lebanon should demonstrate its continued commitment to the full implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) through further concrete steps and actions to counter the prevalence of weapons outside the control of the State and to enhance the ability of the Lebanese State to exercise full sovereignty and authority over all of its territory, in accordance with resolution 1701 (2006). Incidents during the reporting period underlined the extent to which the authority of the State remains challenged in Lebanon. The maintenance of arms by Hizbullah and other groups outside the control of the State continues to pose a threat to Lebanese sovereignty and stability and stands in contradiction to Lebanon's obligations under resolutions 1701 (2006) and 1559 (2004).

63. I conveyed to Prime Minister Mikati my concerns about the incidents and violence that erupted in Tripoli, northern Lebanon and Beirut during the period under review. I commend his efforts and those of President Sleiman, Speaker Berri and other leaders from across the political spectrum to contain the political and the sectarian tension that arose in Lebanon in this context. All those in positions of political leadership in the country share responsibility for helping to calm tempers and reduce friction. This responsibility will be particularly pronounced in the period between now and the 2013 parliamentary elections, as electoral campaigning gets under way.

64. I continue to believe that national dialogue offers the best way to enhance the unity, the political stability, the institutional capacity and the authority of the Lebanese State. The disarmament of armed groups in Lebanon should be achieved through a Lebanese-led political process with the ultimate aim of ensuring that there are no weapons outside the authority of the Government of Lebanon. In this context, I warmly welcome President Sleiman's efforts to reconvene the National Dialogue and the 11 June declaration issued following the first meeting. I call on political leaders in Lebanon to continue their work in this important process.

65. Progress in implementing previous decisions of the National Dialogue, particularly those related to the disarmament of non-Lebanese groups and the dismantling of the PFLP-GC and Fatah al-Intifada military bases, is long overdue. In this context, I also remain conscious of the need to make further progress to improve the living conditions of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, without prejudice to the resolution of the refugee question in the context of a comprehensive regional peace agreement. The situation in the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon requires that the fundamental issues of dignity, service provision and prospects for employment be addressed. I appeal to Member States to reinforce their support for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, its regular programmes aimed at delivering basic education and health care to the refugees, and the reconstruction of the Nahr al-Bared camp. I also note the need to strengthen the work of the Lebanese-Palestinian Dialogue Committee.

66. I commend the fact that the Government of Lebanon, while focusing on managing the domestic repercussions of the Syrian crisis, has maintained its commitment to meeting its international humanitarian obligations towards refugees escaping the violence in the Syrian Arab Republic. It is important that it continue to do so in all respects, including the non-return of persons at risk. The work and the engagement of the High Relief Commission and the Ministry of Social Affairs deserve recognition. I look forward to their extension to the Bekaa. The United Nations family, working as one, will spare no effort to assist and support Syrian refugees and meet their needs until conditions allow them to return to their homes.

67. I stress the need for all parties to fully respect the sovereignty and the territorial integrity of Lebanon, in accordance with Security Council resolutions 1559 (2004), 1680 (2006) and 1701 (2006). In this regard, I condemn the many incidents in which civilians have been killed, injured or put at risk on the Lebanese side of the border with the Syrian Arab Republic owing to the actions of the authorities of the Syrian Arab Republic. I call on the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic to refrain from any such action. The lack of full delineation and demarcation of the Lebanese-Syrian border provides no explanation for most of these incidents, and certainly no justification. Nevertheless, such delineation and

demarcation remains a priority that both Governments need to address. We have repeatedly expressed our deep concern about the abduction in the Syrian Arab Republic of 11 Lebanese citizens. I take this opportunity to call for their immediate release.

68. The efforts of the Lebanese Armed Forces to ensure respect of the arms embargo imposed by resolution 1701 (2006) during the period covered by the present report are noteworthy. In this regard, it is my hope that the Lebanese Armed Forces can build on the successes recorded during the reporting period to further advance monitoring and control of Lebanon's borders, with the longer term objective of ensuring full respect of the arms embargo. I reiterate my call on all Member States to prevent transfers of arms and related materiel to entities or individuals in Lebanon without the consent of the Lebanese State, and I emphasize again the importance of the early adoption and implementation of a comprehensive border management strategy by the Government of Lebanon. Donor contacts and engagement continue with the aim of enabling the provision of coordinated support to the Government of Lebanon in the endeavour to protect the country and its land borders in what is likely to remain a volatile and complex regional environment in the longer term.

69. I am concerned that it has remained impossible to advance a diplomatic process aimed at finding a solution to the issue of the Shab'a Farms area, in accordance with paragraph 10 of resolution 1701 (2006). I call, once again, on the Syrian Arab Republic and Israel to submit their responses to the provisional definition of the Shab'a Farms area that I provided in October 2007 (see S/2007/641).

70. More generally, I would like to note here the role played by the Lebanese Armed Forces, which has been crucial in manifesting unity and working to preserve stability in the country. During the reporting period, the central importance of the Lebanese Armed Forces was underlined repeatedly, as it contributed not only to the preservation of stability along the Blue Line, but also to containing threats to domestic peace and stability elsewhere in the country. I commend the Lebanese Armed Forces for its efforts and engagement in this regard. Where incidents involving the Lebanese Armed Forces occur, such as that in Akkar on 20 May, it is essential that thorough investigations be conducted, and I look forward to the outcome of the Lebanese investigation in this regard. I welcome the expression of strong support for the work of the Lebanese Armed Forces made by the political leadership of Lebanon in the declaration issued following the National Dialogue meeting on 11 June.

71. Despite multiple security responsibilities across the country, the Lebanese Armed Forces has continued to act with strong commitment and resolve as the strategic partner of UNIFIL in southern Lebanon, as well as at sea, and its capacity has been gradually strengthened with the assistance of international donors. The Lebanese Armed Forces must maintain a presence in southern Lebanon commensurate with the important tasks it must perform in line with Lebanon's obligations under resolution 1701 (2006). I am grateful to those countries that are helping to equip and train the Lebanese Armed Forces, including the navy, and I urge the international community to continue this support, which is critical to building the capacity of the Lebanese Armed Forces. Such support is essential for the Lebanese Armed Forces to

assume effective responsibility for security throughout the UNIFIL area of operations and the maritime entry points into Lebanon in the future.

72. I am concerned about the incidents during the reporting period that impeded the freedom of movement of UNIFIL and endangered the safety and security of peacekeepers. I am particularly concerned that some of these incidents have included violent assaults on UNIFIL personnel. As stated in my previous reports, the freedom of movement of UNIFIL and the safety and security of its personnel are integral to the effective execution of its tasks. The primary responsibility for ensuring the freedom of movement of UNIFIL personnel in its area of operations lies with the Lebanese authorities. I call on the Lebanese authorities to take firm, resolute action against the perpetrators, and to find ways to work with UNIFIL to strengthen the response to and the investigation of these incidents. Effective measures must be taken to curb and prevent all incidents that impede the freedom of movement of UNIFIL and endanger the safety and security of peacekeepers.

73. I wish to express my appreciation to all countries contributing troops and equipment to UNIFIL. I also commend the military and the civilian personnel of UNIFIL, as well as the staff of the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon, all of whom continue to play a critical role in helping to promote stability along the Blue Line and in Lebanon.

74. Exploration and exploitation of maritime resources in the eastern Mediterranean holds the promise of wealth and benefit for all societies concerned. For this reason, I continue to encourage all relevant States in the area to undertake the necessary preparations and efforts in a manner that does not give rise to tension. In the case of Israel and Lebanon, I welcome steps to facilitate the exploration and the exploitation of resources in areas that are not in dispute. I also remain conscious of the need to address issues related to the delimitation of maritime zones. We have continued to engage in contacts with relevant interlocutors during the reporting period to encourage this. The United Nations remains ready to assist the parties further in this matter, should they both request it.

75. Resolution 1701 (2006) continues to represent a cornerstone of relative calm and stability in an area that for too many years has been characterized by conflict and volatility. At the same time, the full implementation of the resolution and full respect of the territorial integrity, the sovereignty and the political independence of Lebanon will also remain contingent upon efforts to address other causes of instability in the region. This concerns both the continued crisis in the Syrian Arab Republic and the enduring absence of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the region. I therefore call on Israel, Lebanon and all other relevant parties to redouble their efforts to work towards not only the full implementation of resolution 1701 (2006), but also that of all other Security Council resolutions furthering the cause of peace and stability in the region.